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Lucien Hervé and Le Corbusier: pair or peers?

Marco Iuliano

*Liverpool School of Architecture, UK (Author's
e-mail address: marco.iuliano@liverpool.ac.uk)*

The lasting iconicity surrounding the seminal accomplishments in modern architecture has its roots in long-term alliances between architects and photographers. The Masters of the Modern Movement carefully managed their public 'image' largely by establishing a distinct relationship with specific photographers, whose visual sensibility appeared to amplify the underlying design intent for maximum impact on the collective unconscious.

Le Corbusier experienced particularly effective affinities with Lucien Hervé (1910–2007), whose photographic signature memorialised the last fifteen years of the Swiss/French architect's output. By choosing one photographer and remaining loyal to him for a significant amount of time, Le Corbusier ensured that his architecture took on a consistency that is partially the by-product of a photographic mind close to his architectural sensitivity. After the Second World War, there are numerous examples of such an interrelationship, among the most notable being Neutra/Shulman, Bunshaft/Stoller and Ellwood/Rand, with varying degrees of intensity, yet all revealing similar patterns of co-construction. Such a dynamic touched every corner of the globe where modern architecture was built and published, but was particularly visible in Europe and North America.

Drawing on published and unpublished materials this paper focusses closely on the ramifications of the working couple Hervé/Le Corbusier so as to highlight the formation and consolidation of the partnership. This collaboration would elucidate the mutual influences between disciplines when a new, more humane idea of Modernity was formed and broadcast around the world.

I always wanted above all to understand his thinking.
Understanding someone's thinking does not mean accepting
everything he does, as it also implies reflection on what he said.¹

Lucien Hervé on Le Corbusier, 2006

Pairs

The Le Corbusier who met Lucien Hervé in 1949 was a very different man from the young Charles-Edouard Jeanneret who had left the Swiss village of La Chaux-de-Fonds for Paris in 1917: in between the

years he had developed a formidable technique for presenting himself to the public, as the architect of the white villas and as the author of propaganda writings such as *Vers une Architecture* (1923) and *L'Almanach de l'Architecture Moderne* (1925).

And then the Second World War profoundly changed Le Corbusier's way of looking at the world. He appears to have moved from his youthful position, characterised by a strong egocentrism, to a more sympathetic stance of one who considered, more than before, his relationship with his neighbour. So it is no accident that the first book he published during the world conflict, written in collaboration with François de Pierrefeu, was entitled *La Maison des Hommes* (1942).

The centre of the Corbusian speculation progressively shifts from an obsession with the architectural object to sensitivity towards mankind. The result of this change was evident, and arguably reached its apex, in the design of Notre-Dame du Haut at Ronchamp, completed in 1955. So it was this character, the 'new' Le Corbusier, that Lucien Hervé met in the middle of the twentieth century.

Hervé's extensive experience as a photographic reporter, and his particular approach of taking a great number of shots in sequence, meant he was able to produce more than 600 photographs of the *Unité d'Habitation* in Marseille on a single day in 1949—a day which was to modify the course of his life (figs 1–12). After sending his prints to Le Corbusier, as was required according to the notice posted at the entrance, Hervé received a letter from the architect that now constitutes a chapter of architectural history. A poignant fragment of this letter is usually recalled, in which Le Corbusier writes of Hervé as having *une âme d'architecte*, the soul of an architect; but here it seems appropriate to recall the entire content of the letter:

Paris, 15 December 1949

Re.: Photographs of the Unité d'Habitation in Marseille

Dear Sir,

I have examined the large set of photographs that you took of the Unité d'Habitation.

I wish to convey my most sincere congratulations for your exceptional work. You have the soul of an architect and you know how to see architecture.

I have made a small selection of the prints that I wish to include in our file to send to the journalists who often come here to ask for documentation. In particular, I have forwarded your collection to 'Réalités', which will shortly publish an article on our work.

I would like to propose two subjects for a photo report that could, I think, offer you a good number of sales and also allow your talent to be expressed in a very original way. The first is a complete documentation on the Swiss Pavilion of the University City that will soon celebrate its twentieth anniversary and is in an excellent state of conservation; it is a significant prototype of urbanism and architecture, as well as a synthesis of the plastic arts.

I am convinced that, with a well-organized collection of photographs, you will find publishers or authors eager to use your work.

The second would be a photo report on my private apartment, where I keep various objects of a different nature distributed in a particular way, which would provide an as yet unknown



Figure 1. A photograph within the first series on the *Unité d'Habitation* by Hervé in 1949 (© J. Paul Getty Trust and Fondation Le Corbusier ADAGP/DACS).

point of view on a domestic arrangement that (I think) corresponds to the modern sensibility.

Finally, a third question: I do not know whether you also excel in photography of painting (paintings or murals), but I have a series of murals, paintings and drawings that could perhaps be the subject of a work about which we could talk when we meet.

Come to see me some time. Call me by telephone to make an appointment.

Yours sincerely.

Le Corbusier²

The sparks emanating from the letter as a whole exceed what the normally cited extract could evoke: Le Corbusier's esteem for Hervé is crystalline. For those who are familiar with the archives of the Fondation Le Corbusier in Paris at Villa La Roche, where all documentation relating to the architect is stored, this is a rare occasion: in other correspondence, such a staunch, appreciative tone is almost completely absent. And we should not forget that the letter was sent, at the time, to someone Le Corbusier had never met. It seems that he was so overwhelmed by Hervé's images that he immediately perceived an effective affinity, based on the unique sensitivity of the Hungarian-born photographer—a sensitivity that Le Corbusier could easily recognise—*vous savez voir l'architecture*.

This reflection initiates the other themes of the letter, the forerunners of the collaboration, which from that moment thrived for fifteen years.

The acquaintance between the two is less known, but Lucien Hervé spoke about it in some interviews, in particular one granted to the Italian journal

Abitare in 1992, wherein other interesting details are revealed.

We spoke to each other over the telephone and he invited me to his painter's studio the following Monday morning, where he usually spent the first part of the day painting. We talked a lot about painting and Le Corbusier was delighted to discover my genuine passion for it. We also talked a lot about music and he frequently mentioned his brother Albert Jeanneret, a violinist and teacher. I had the impression I was setting out on an exceptional intellectual adventure. (...)

He felt that photography should serve both as a technical tool for documentation and as a means for interpretation and communication. But L.C. was not one to beat about the bush: he thought my photos were good, so it went without saying that I would start working with him. It was then that L.C. decided he needed a complete photographic archive, so he got me to start documenting his work, which also included recording drawings and models. When a new work of architecture was to be photographed and I was already familiar with the material of the project because I had photographed them, he didn't give me any special instructions: everything was self evident and all you had to do was to observe. Moreover, he said he didn't wish to be disturbed over trifles; everyone should get on with their own job. He would occasionally advise on when the best time to take a certain photo would be—when a tree was in blossom, say—or he might suggest photographing the construction site to describe particular building techniques.³

As reported by Olivier Beer, in one of the most important catalogues published on Lucien Hervé, it is not so surprising that after the meeting Le Corbusier gave the photographer his first camera, an old 6×10 bellows model;⁴ and that he charged Hervé with the responsibility for his photographic archives.⁵

Wim de Wit noted that the impact of Le Corbusier's decision to choose Hervé as mainly responsible for photographs becomes clear when we observe the credits in the *Œuvre Complète* ['Complete Works'], starting from volume 5, which covers the production of the architect's work from 1946 to 1952: 'the photographs in this volume are almost entirely the work of Lucien Hervé of Paris'.⁶

Le Corbusier had a very clear relationship with photography, and other photographers, between the wars, which was radically different from the one that he shared with Hervé. Charles Gérard, Georges Thiriet, Renè Levy, Marius Gravot and Albin Salaün, all established photographers, were fundamentally material executors of his thinking. In Le Corbusier's archive there are several examples of the architect's absolute, even geometrical, direction in first the creation and then the dissemination of the images.⁷

The archives also contain detailed requests by Le Corbusier to professionals, ensuring his complete control of the photographs, which he requires to be numbered and delivered directly to him in person.⁸ At a later stage, the Swiss-French architect modified the printed photographs to give some clues about his thinking, to demonstrate an idea: he retouched the images deleting any elements that disturbed the ideal condition.⁹

Nonetheless, many of the images of Le Corbusier's buildings reveal his presence at the making of the original shot—his motorcars, hat or other objects—bearing witness to his role in ensuring a photograph focusses on precise points of view and particular glimpses: a complete *mise en scène* dictated by his promotional motives. We may say that his control of photography creates a biased veil through which we perceive his architecture.¹⁰ Le Corbusier knew that architecture becomes modern not only through its use of materials—glass, concrete and steel—but by 'engaging with the new mechanical equipment of the mass media: photography, film, architecture and advertising'.¹¹

An example of this control would be the reproduction of some images that appeared in Le Corbusier's *Œuvre Complète*, volumes 1 and 2 (published in Zurich by Editions Girsberger). The sketch of the Villa Savoye's terrace, with a chair in the foreground, is published among the last projects of the first volume of the *Œuvre Complète* (1910–1929), with the caption 'Du jardin superior on monte au toit' ['From the upper garden one ascends to the roof'], emphasising the role of the ramp and consequently instigating the generation and development of the *promenade architecturale*. The first volume of the 'Complete Works' was published in 1930, when the Villa was still incomplete. It was to be presented, very fully, in volume 2, which covers the years from 1929 to 1934: the same perspective view as the sketch is now a full-page photograph, accompanied by the caption 'Villa Savoye à Poissy: jardin suspendu' ['Villa Savoye in Poissy: hanging garden'] and it is one of the sixteen images of the Villa pub-

lished on this occasion, shot by Marius Gravot under the control of Le Corbusier.

As a whole the building is represented in an almost cinematographic sequence. Daniel Naegele noticed that the two most interesting of these photographs are certainly the first one, which records our initial encounter with the Villa as we arrive in a motor car, and the one that suggests the culmination of the *promenade architecturale*. 'Architecture is to be apprehended, it seems, by both the body and the eye in motion.'¹²

The photographs, selected with such care by Le Corbusier (and probably directed by him), should be read in tandem with his verbal description in the book itself and their objective is to elevate the Villa to a status that engages with an ideal canon.

In relation to the Villa Savoye, it is probably appropriate to recall here also the collaboration between Le Corbusier and the filmmaker Pierre Chenal, from whom Le Corbusier commissioned a documentary on contemporary architecture, *Architectures d'Aujourd'hui* (1930–31), divided into four parts. Obviously, the vast majority of the buildings represented in the short film (running for less than 10 minutes) are Corbusian works, alongside those of Auguste Perret and Robert Mallet Stevens. The third part constitutes the bulk of the film, with its representation of the Villa Stein-De Monzie in Garches, the Villa Church in Ville d'Avray and the Villa Savoye in Poissy. The scene of a woman going up the ramp of the Villa Savoye in *Architectures d'Aujourd'hui* is the key to this entire short filmic example of Le Corbusier's

promenade architecturale, which emphasises the notion of architecture as a discovery. The sequence is short (45 seconds) and follows a journey from inside, at first-floor level, to the roof terrace, the final illustration of Le Corbusier's five points. The static sequence of photographs in the 'Complete Works' had become a flowing, continuous representation of the Villa.

François Penz has shown that this key scene in *Architectures d'Aujourd'hui*—the representation of the woman on Villa Savoye's ramp—constitutes the most consistent example of a continuity editing scene, and yet there are several inconsistencies which reveal the nature of the collaboration and the translation of Le Corbusier's intention to the screen. It is a scene that is technically erroneous in the cinematographic realm, in that it is designed to satisfy the narrative and promotional needs of Le Corbusier.¹³

As an architect seeking absolute control, Le Corbusier completely understood the potential of the new media and the close connection with advertisement; and he exploited it. As Beatriz Colomina noticed, for Le Corbusier the world of communication was not secondary to the one of the built form: photography was not only a way of documenting architecture, but an integral part of architectural production. A consistent number of photographs, indeed, can be found at the beginning and at the end of the creative process 'when he carefully composed photographs to present his buildings in a particular way, even retouching the images when the project as realized was not as polemical as what he had in mind'.¹⁴



Figure 2. Lucien Hervé photographed the *Unité d'Habitation* several times after his first visit in 1949; this photograph shows the relationship with the natural context in 1951 (© J. Paul Getty Trust and Fondation Le Corbusier ADAGP/DACS).

Figure 3. A detail of the *Unité d'Habitation* in a photograph by Hervé, 1951 (© J. Paul Getty Trust and Fondation Le Corbusier ADAGP/DACS): 'I always photograph in such a way-as Le Corbusier and I had discussed at length concerning painting-that a photograph should be able to be viewed upside down. Because for us it is not the theme that is important, it is not the subject, but essentially the plastic expression.' ('An interview with Lucien Hervé', see Note 44).



Le Corbusier, photographer

Tim Benton recently analysed the documentation on Le Corbusier as a photographer preserved at the Villa La Roche in Paris. It shows a lesser-known side of the architect, his own photography: the documentation is an unusual production that has a great variety, consisting of 18 reels of film and nearly 6,000 photographs. The photographs are intended for his own use and include traditional shots, moving images and still photographs taken from his film camera.¹⁵

To position Le Corbusier better in relation to photography and to understand how common was the ground shared by Le Corbusier with Hervé, it is important to consider that his activity and thinking

was significantly influenced by the international *avant-garde* movements in the 1920s and early 1930s, which intertwined visual and material culture. Le Corbusier was certainly aware of the theories developed by the Futurists, the Dutch group De Stijl—published in the journal of the same name from 1917 onwards—and he was particularly keen on the early activity of László Moholy-Nagy. Furthermore, he was familiar with the work of Werner Graeff, El Lissitzky and Hans Richter, who were all involved at that time with the German interdisciplinary journal *G: Material zur elementaren Gestaltung* ['G: Material for elemental form Creation'].¹⁶

In 1928 Le Corbusier and Moholy-Nagy were both cited in Sigfried Giedion's book *Bauen in Frankreich Bauen in Eisen Bauen in Eisenbeton*: Le Corbusier in the acknowledgements and Moholy-Nagy for typography, layout and the cover design, which is an inverted photograph of the famous *Pont Transbordeur* ['Transporter Bridge'] in Marseille, taken by Giedion himself.¹⁷ This seminal work, Le Corbusier's favorite book by Giedion,¹⁸ might be considered to be another milestone of the *zeitgeist*, where new vision and new materials came together to create a new architecture.

Even if it is not easy to trace back all these influences, we can say that Le Corbusier's opinions on photography at the time were not dissimilar from those set out by Moholy-Nagy in an article entitled 'How Photography Revolutionises Vision', published in the early 1930s in the British Journal *The Listener*. We cannot be sure that Le Corbusier had direct access to the article, but he certainly had complete knowledge of the concepts of Moholy-Nagy, which the Hungarian summarised in *The Listener*. The fol-

lowing passages seem particularly relevant for this discussion:

Through photography, too, we can participate in new experiences of space, and in even greater measure through film. With their help, and that of the new school of architects, we have attained an enlargement and sublimation of our appreciation of space, the comprehension of a new spatial culture. Thanks to the photographer humanity has acquired the power of perceiving its surrounding, and its very existence, with new eyes. (...) The pre-requisite of this revolution is, of course, the realisation that a knowledge of photography is just as important as that of the alphabet. The illiterates of the future will be ignorant of the use of the camera and pen alike.¹⁹

We already know that Le Corbusier took documentary images during his formative trips, particularly in the 'Journey to the East' (1907–1911): as recorded by Benton, he worked first with a cheap Kodak and later with a Cupido 80. But the most interesting photographs are shot in a short period of years between 1936 and 1938. Indeed, whilst the vast majority of Le Corbusier's photographs are primarily factual and related to his family, the still photographs constitute a body of work of impressive quality and reflect on the examination of nature rendered in abstract; most importantly, the photographs 'provide a key to his imagination'.²⁰

The interesting examples include, amongst others, some images of sand and water taken on the beach of Le Piquey in 1936–37: they record the tides and are all characterised by a strong interplay between light and shadow. It is also worth recalling the 583 images of the mechanical elements of the SS

Conte Biancamano during his voyage back to France from Brazil in August, 1936.

From then on, Le Corbusier no longer used a camera and gave a reason for this in an interview in the 1960s: 'I noticed that by entrusting my emotions to a lens I was forgetting to have them pass through me—which was serious. So I abandoned the Kodak and picked up my pencil, and ever since then I have always drawn everything, wherever I am.'²¹

Peers

The relationship with Hervé would be an ideal prosecution of these photographic speculations and in complete contrast to Le Corbusier's relationship between the wars with other photographers. Obviously, it was not always an idyllic association, as is shown by several examples of their exchanges of letters. One particularly interesting document, full of irony, has been published recently in Michel Richard's preface to the volume *Le Corbusier/Lucien Hervé: Contacts*. In summary, Le Corbusier states, in view of the length of Hervé's letters, that from now on—30th July, 1962—he ought to catalogue their correspondence under the title 'Hervéide', after the Aeneid, the Iliad and the 'Trouinade'. The last reference is to Edouard Trouin, a Marseillaise, who in 1945 had commissioned an unrealised project with a particularly exhausting and controversial history. This is one of those cases when the compliment of December, 1949, gives way to sharp sarcasm.²²

The epistolary exchanges between Hervé and Le Corbusier are substantial and rich in interesting details. Whilst all the correspondence with his family and those close to him between 1900 and

Figure 4. Lucien Hervé's
Unité d'Habitation
photograph shows a
detail of the concrete
texture recorded in
1951 (© J. Paul Getty
Trust and Fondation Le
Corbusier ADAGP/
DACS).



1965—including his mentor Charles L'Eplattenier—has been published, this is not yet the case with the letters to his peers.²³ Recently, a Hungarian scholar, Imola Gebauer, has begun patiently cataloguing the written exchanges between the architect and the photographer: it will be important, in due course, to have available the whole of this *corpus*.

The book *Contacts* is a selection from the thousands of 6×6 cm, 6×9 cm (and sometimes larger) contact prints kept at the Fondation Le Corbusier in Paris, which are stuck on 21×32 cm pieces of coloured cardboard [*cartons*]. The book, for the first time, moves the focus of attention from the artistic value of Hervé's work to that of the production of the images and the relationship with Le Corbusier. Jacques Sbriglio, editor of the publication, selected sixteen of Le Corbusier's works and Hervé's related contact prints, mounted on the cardboard sheets: in this volume, 184 of these *planches* can now be carefully studied, are reproduced in their original colours and are interspersed with some full-page images.²⁴ The photographic equipment was usually his beloved Rolleiflex, which allowed quick, expressive images (eg, [figs 5, 6](#)). Later, in addition, the photographer used a Japanese copy of the Hasselblad (a Bronica 6/6), a Plauben and a Linhof; he rarely used a tripod.

The *cartons* are the media of communication between the two artists, but they also have a fundamental documentary value. Whilst we need to recall that the Getty Research Institute in California holds the entire collection of Hervé's negatives dedicated to Le Corbusier, over 18,000 items, it is important to remember that Hervé called himself a 'photographer with scissors',²⁵ referring to his habit of cropping the printed images in his search for the ideal



Figure 5. Hervé's photograph of the façade of the *Unité d'Habitation*, 1951 (© J. Paul Getty Trust and Fondation Le Corbusier ADAGP/DACS).

frame, without any apparent respect for the original negative. To have an idea of how frequent were these cuts, we may refer to the precise, extended captions of the book edited by Olivier Beer: among the 170 images published in the catalogue, the vast majority are 6×6 cm and 6×9 cm cropped prints.²⁶ This process has a precise motivation and is far from the logic of collage, as clarified by Hervé in another interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist:

No, I not am thinking about collage, a practice that I am very fond of, but it has no connection with this. Rather, I was trying to apply a freedom and a methodical rigour to the construction of each image. Look, the difference from many photographers of that time is that I had no respect for the film itself. For most photographers, the negative is almost sacred and the prints are final. For me it was the opposite, and not only because I was a young photographer who wanted to be free in everything he did, whether it was a painting, a drawing, a collage or a photo-

graph (...). In an image, the relations between forms and colours form the composition. Working on the contact prints with or without scissors, we must ensure that each image captures the idea of something built, and also, I might add, a certain purity. I use scissors simply because they help me to get that result.²⁷

Drafts also exist, second copies of these *cartons*, kept in Hervé's private archive. As one might expect, the quality and the state of preservation of these latter pieces are not the same as those kept at the Fondation Le Corbusier, as study copies; but the collection is equally useful for scholars who want to understand the value and the logic of the architectural representation.²⁸ Hervé's private copies are more technical documents, linked to personal explorations of architecture, attentive in understanding the impact of the light on the building and on its materiality. They make an interesting series, and sometimes the images show potential cutting lines on the contact prints (Fig. 9).

For each of Le Corbusier's works we therefore have available a set of printed images, often cropped and glued onto a number of cardboard sheets. The number of contact prints on each cardboard is not always the same—in a few cases there is only one image—but generally there are eleven or twelve photographs on each final copy of the *cartons* kept at the Fondation Le Corbusier, while Hervé personal copies are more pragmatic collections of images, which fill the capacity of an entire cardboard. A reference number is provided for each photograph and the *cartons* are themselves numbered. These references are required to relate the images to the negatives in the archive.

Furthermore, it is noticeable that in several *cartons* kept at the Fondation Le Corbusier the composition works through visual analogy, or a dialogue between the expression of different shapes. Only a few *cartons* look more randomly organised: Madame Judith Elkan Hervé, the photographer's wife, recalls in conversation that this can be related to the fact that the *cartons* for Le Corbusier's use were realised, at the same time, by both Lucien Hervé and Le Corbusier's secretary.²⁹

By analysing in detail the cardboards of the *Unité d'Habitation* in Marseille, composed for Le Corbusier, we can detect Hervé's *modus operandi*: particularly revealing is a set of photographs of the concrete emergency stair [*escalier de secours*]. This *carton* and the related contact prints are part of a critical selection, twenty-two cardboards, published in the book *Contacts* referred to above.³⁰ Among those published are images shot over an extended period, during construction and after completion when the block was inhabited. They include: portraits of Le Corbusier standing near to his *Modulor* at the base of the *Unité*; ground works and excavations; workers on site standing amongst the reinforcing bars; views from above, which often generate abstract geometries, framed similarly to the well-known series produced at the end of the 1940s, *Paris sans quitter ma fenêtre* (PSQF). But above all, they record the plastic presence of the concrete in dialogue with changing lighting conditions, thanks to Hervé's masterful use of light and shadow as compositional elements. He never made a mystery of the central role of the shadow in the construction of the image: 'Indeed, I have always used shade to build the image, not to achieve an aesthetic effect (I



Figure 6. A tilted image of the *Unité d'Habitation* made by Hervé in 1951 (© J. Paul Getty Trust and Fondation Le Corbusier ADAGP/DACS).

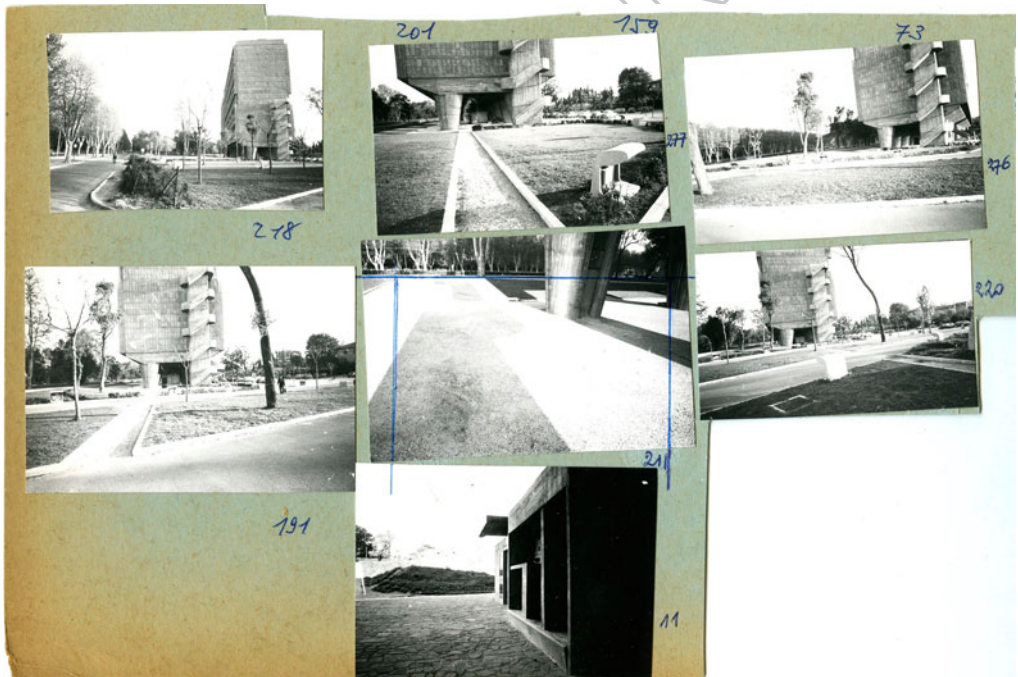
Figure 7. The first of
two documentary
photographs of the
Unité d'Habitation in
the 1950s: inverted
photograph without
any cutting (© J. Paul
Getty Trust and
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ADAGP/DACS).





Figure 8. The second of two documentary photographs of the *Unité d'Habitation* in the 1950s: positive image, with a significant cut at the bottom and on the left side (© J. Paul Getty Trust and Fondation Le Corbusier ADAGP/DACS).

Figure 9. One of Lucien Hervé's *cartons* of the *Unité d'Habitation* in his private archive, 1950s: in the central contact print, note the framing with the suggested cut of the image (© J. Paul Getty Trust and Fondation Le Corbusier ADAGP/DACS).



have hardly ever done that) but to give force to the image'.³¹

The shots dedicated to the *Unité d'Habitation*'s security stairs and dated 'Avril 1957' in the upper left corner are a readable example by which we can understand Hervé's complex way of working. This *carton* is composed of eleven contact prints. It is immediately clear, compared with other images of the *Unité*, that these are photographs taken from a human view-

point, such as one would obtain in a tour of the building moving one's gaze around.

If we plot on a plan the points of view of the images, we immediately understand that we are dealing with a vision in motion that describes the spatial sequence. The images give us a plastic sense—like sculptures—demonstrating the response to light of the *béton brut* [raw concrete], according to the new sensitivity to the texture and imperfec-



Figure 10. Lucien Hervé's carton of the *Unité d'Habitation* in Marseille, April, 1957 (© J. Paul Getty Trust and Fondation Le Corbusier ADAGP/DACS).

tions of concrete, developed by Le Corbusier after the Second World War, perfectly transposed here by Hervé into still images (Fig. 10).³²

The sequence starts with a close-up image of the stairs (213); then Hervé raises his camera to look at the contrast of the stairs and the façade (216). He moves further south and frames part of the stairs with the structure (214–215). He negotiates the pillars and after three shots of them (217–218–219)

he passes under the structure. It is very interesting to note the deep shadows and the different appearance of the concrete from this side (220–223). The promenade is now complete, concluding with another view from beneath the stairs, the powerful shadows becoming elements of composition, an integral part of the design of the surfaces (221–222).

The spatial configuration of this dynamic vision is related to time: it is the research of a continuum, not

Figure 11. A photograph by Lucien Hervé of the roof of the *Unité d'Habitation*, 1952: recto (© J. Paul Getty Trust and Fondation Le Corbusier ADAGP/DACS).



divided into single and separate elements, but articulated in flowing passages, represented through spatial sequences of still images suggesting a vision in motion. 'In sum Hervé understood the difficulty of catching the multiplicity of space'³³ and these images probably help us to understand the concept of Corbusian space more obviously than his own drawings. It brings to mind Sigfried Giedion's reflections: 'Corbusier's houses are neither spatial nor plastic: air flows through them! Air becomes a constituent factor! Neither space nor plastic form counts, only RELATION and INTERPENE-

TRATION! There is only a single, indivisible space. The shells fall away between interior and exterior.'³⁴

This example is testimony to the relevance of the documentation and the consequent importance of the *cartons* as a whole, which, as discussed, were used for a variety of different purposes, and not only with such a kinematic approach. But the security stair example illustrates the rationale of Hervé's experimental ambition, in offering an interpretation of the evolution of Le Corbusier's thinking: to use still photography for the composition of a narrative device through montage. Once more, what Moholy-Nagy wrote in his article in *The Listener* cited above clarifies how to read the image through the spirit of the time:

There is no more surprising, yet, in its naturalness and organic sequence, simpler form than the photographic series. This is the logical culmination of photography. The series is no longer a 'picture', and none of the canons of pictorial aesthetics can be applied to it. Here the separate picture loses its identity as such and it becomes a detail of assembly, an essential structural element of the whole which is the thing itself. In this concatenation of its separate but inseparable parts a photographic series inspired by a definite purpose can become at once the most potent weapon and the tenderest lyric.³⁵

In an article that appeared in the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Veronique Boone wrote that, in 1952, when the *Unité* was near completion, Le Corbusier developed a new idea for a film for the general public. *La cité radieuse* (1953) is the only colour film to illustrate the building: its Director was Lucien Hervé's friend

Jean Sacha. The film presents the block in Marseille completed and inhabited. Even if Le Corbusier once again kept this film under his partial supervision, the episode must be linked to the Chenal precedent of twenty years before, so as to highlight the different relationship in the collaborations. Le Corbusier's control is transformed, since Hervé is trusted as someone who is able to see architecture with a similar sensitivity; and indeed in this film 'some shots and stills are almost exact copies of photographs published in *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* and elsewhere',³⁶ images already taken by Hervé were thus re-presented.

An early experience in Hervé's youth gives us a taste of how he would consider images in movement, which we can relate to the photographs described earlier. Hervé said he discovered the power of the moving image by chance, on a bicycle. When he was employed by the *Société dauphinoise d'études et des montages* in Grenoble, he used to bicycle to the local market, and that was how he became aware of shadows and their relationship to the environment. He translated this perception into his work: the constant corrections we make when we watch something as we move, particularly how shadows and light are affected by speed.³⁷

Hervé was known to have had a keen interest in the films of Eisenstein, Pabst, Pudovkin and Vigo, as well as those of German expressionism; this was a cinematographic passion, particularly for the Russian cinema, that he shared with Le Corbusier. These enthusiasms are another proof, should we still need one, of the richness of Hervé's cultural background.³⁸

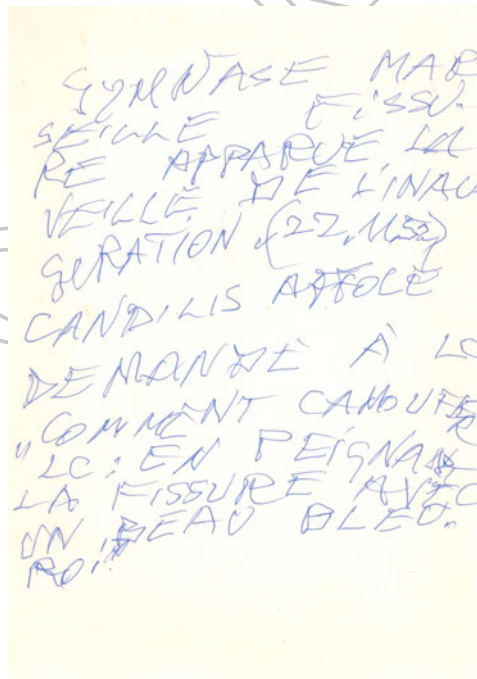


Figure 12. Verso of the same 1952 photograph by Lucien Hervé of the *Unité d'Habitation* (Fig. 11), with the note of a memory, added later by Hervé himself, which reads in translation: 'Marseille Gym. Fissure appeared the day before the inauguration (22.11.52). Candilis panicking asks LC how it could be camouflaged. LC: "Filling the crack with a beautiful bleu roi [king blue]"'.

In one of the interviews Hervé, as well as the influence of cinema, spoke about his interest in Fernand Léger, shared by Le Corbusier, but particularly about his personal passion for Rembrandt and his importance for his photographic thinking. It seems that Hervé felt that his art had its closest relationship with that of painters; indeed, a painter himself, he reproduced on the ceiling of his flat in the 16th arrondissement, in Trocadero, a work by Mondrian. Hervé clearly expressed this relationship between photography and its sister arts in a key passage of a 1956 article:

The painted image or photography will gain its value from the harmony of its contrasts and experimentation with human feelings. Its of little importance if an image is produced due to a photograph or if it is a drawing by Seurat or a painting by Mondrain.

The photo, as painting, stops the interest of the subject alone. The photo, like painting, often penetrates the subject beyond its visible surface. What complicates the comparison is that the photographer is not only an artist, in the sense of freedom to the subject, but often interpretes. In the same way, a conductor or a pianist selects the sounds and tones of instruments to remake the taste of his harmony fuller, whilst scrupulously respecting the intention of the composer, or in this case the architect. In a work of three dimensions he transcribes an image of two dimensions. He penetrates inside the built works. He forces himself to understand the intentions of the creator.³⁹

The deep and poetic attention to light, as important in Rembrandt's paintings as in Le Corbusier's intellectual realm, is at the centre of the speculations contained in a beautiful book, probably the best of the entire career of the Hungarian-born photographer, published in French by Arthaud in 1956 under the title *La Plus Grande Aventure du Monde* and the following year in English by Thames and Hudson as *Architecture of Truth*. In 2001 Phaidon republished the book, but with significant alterations. It is a photographic representation of the Abbey at Le Thoronet, built in Provence for Cistercians monks in the twelfth century. Hervé's images are black and white, printed by him for the occasion

of the publication and accompanied by captions taken from the bible, the psalms and the words of St Bernard of Clairvaux. The presence of the monks is only suggested in the photographs, in the textures of the stone, the light and the shadows, which are masterfully composed in each image, and tend to transform them from representations of physical reality to pure abstractions.

In a letter of congratulation, when he received the book, Le Corbusier used, again, exceptionally complimentary terms, describing the '*magnifique livre*'.⁴⁰ He wrote:

You have made a true creative work. This is very beautiful. Very beautiful, to have seen, then have chosen the place and the hour, then to have realised a click. This is not something photogenic, it is photography at the highest degree.⁴¹

In its entirety the volume reaches a level of absolute lyricism, as noted by Le Corbusier, who, in addition to the letter, wrote an introduction: anticipating the logic of the book, he states that architecture is the infinite sum of positive gestures, in which the whole and its details combine as one.

Hervé did not bother to 'falsify' the images by using photographic filters, but faithfully represented the canonical hours of the day of the Cistercians.

The arrangement of the book follows each prayer time, because he wanted to show the exact lighting in the different moments of the day. To illustrate the noon hour, for example, he printed photographs that were almost grey, with the sun erasing the shadows. The result is one of the most beautiful books of photographs.

Through the different conditions of light, he allows us to perceive the architecture realistically.

But, cumulatively, by means of his specific narrative, Hervé transports his reader's psyche into a deeply spiritual realm.

We encounter similar sensations when we first browse, and later read, another book, this time dedicated to the man to whom Lucien said he owed everything in his life, as Judith Elkan Hervé recalled in the conversation cited earlier. *L'Artiste et l'écrivain. Le Corbusier/The Artist and the writer. Le Corbusier*, was published in both French and English simultaneously by Editions du Griffon of Neuchâtel in 1970 in a square format. Hervé selected a very reduced number of photographs from the thousands that he made for the architect and composed the layout of the book as a dialogue between the images and texts written by Le Corbusier himself.⁴²

The book is truly a tribute to the career of Le Corbusier, five years after his death, and is divided into roughly three chronological chapters that cover the realisation of Ronchamp from 1950 to 1954 (Chapter 1, 'the ripeness of the work') and of Chandigarh from 1952 to 1965 (Chapter 2, 'the ripeness of a capital'), followed by a more biographical section (Chapter 3, 'the ripeness of the architectonic expression'). In this final section, Le Corbusier's career is divided into three periods: from the ages of 30 to 50, from 50 to 65 and from 68 to 78.⁴³ As in the case of the Abbey at Le Thoronet, the book begins with a series of details before reaching a full overview of Le Corbusier's career.

Hervé borrows sections of Le Corbusier's books to provide a commentary on his images; the title he chose is obviously of dense significance, because, although Le Corbusier felt he had been appreciated

as architect, he believed his undoubted qualities as artist and writer had not been acknowledged.

In an interview Hervé said:

I voluntarily reduced my book on Le Corbusier to three chapters which have little to do one with one another. I wanted to show that it is unthinkable to reduce to a single book Le Corbusier's manner of being. I did the first chapter on what must have passed through the mind of Le Corbusier in order to do Ronchamp. When I had spoken of this book to Charlotte Perriand, she said to me, 'You are going to talk the subject to death'. I did not talk it to death. I found the texts of Le Corbusier himself, in order to show its progress. It is he who speaks, and consequently I have not a word of my own in it. All are the words of Le Corbusier.⁴⁴

The volume consistently concludes with an extended quotation from Le Corbusier, taken from the tiny book *Mise au Point* (1966), the spiritual testament of the architect, posthumously published by Jean Petit.⁴⁵ The touching passage that best synthesises the long quotation that Hervé chose and republished is when Le Corbusier states that, in the light of his 77 years' experience, what he has learned is that in life one must simply act. Lucien Hervé, as usual linking this notion to his own idea of rigour,⁴⁶ adds no further comment on the words and the thoughts of the architect: he knew, just as Le Corbusier did, how important it is to question every day what one does.

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Credits

Photographs by Lucien Hervé, the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2002.R.41). I thank the Getty Research Institute and the Fondation Le Corbusier for the kind permission to publish Lucien Hervé's photographs.

Notes and references

1. Hans Ulrich Obrist, *Lucien Hervé* (Paris, Manuella éditions, 2011), p. 55: 'J'ai toujours cherché avant tout à comprendre sa pensée. Comprendre la pensée de quelqu'un ne signifie pas accepter tout ce qu'il fait, mais signifie aussi se poser des questions sur ce qu'il a dit.'
2. Fondation Le Corbusier (hereinafter FLC), E2(4)219: 'Cher Monsieur, J'ai examiné le lot important de photographies que vous avez prises de l'Unité d'Habitation. Je tiens à vous faire mes plus sincères compliments sur votre travail remarquable. Vous avez une âme d'architecte et vous savez voir l'architecture. J'ai fait un petit choix de vos épreuves que je désire inscrire dans nos références pour être soumises aux journalistes qui viennent si fréquemment ici demander des documents. En particulier, je sou mets votre collection à "Réalités" qui publiera prochainement un article sur nous. Je vous propose deux sujets de reportage qui pourraient, je crois, vous permettre des ventes utiles et qui permettraient à votre talent de se manifester de façon très originale. Il s'agit d'une part, d'une documentation complète sur le Pavillon Suisse de la

Cité Universitaire qui va bientôt fêter son XXe anniversaire et qui s'est maintenu dans d'excellentes conditions; c'est un prototype significatif d'urbanisme et d'architecture, et de synthèse des arts plastiques. Je suis persuadé que devant une collection de photographies bien établie, vous trouverez des éditeurs ou des auteurs désireux d'employer votre documentation. La seconde chose serait un reportage sur mon appartement privé où se trouvaient divers objets d'une certaine nature et placés de manière particulière, donnant ainsi un point de vue inconnu encore sur l'aménagement domestique correspondant (me semble-t-il), à la sensibilité moderne. Enfin, troisième chose: je ne sais pas si vous excellez dans la photographie de peinture (tableaux ou peintures murales), mais j'ai une série de peintures murales, tableaux et dessins qui pourrait peut-être faire l'objet d'un travail et sur lequel, en cette occasion, nous pourrions discuter affaire. Venez me voir à l'occasion. Téléphonez-moi pour un rendez-vous.

Croyez, Cher Monsieur, à mes sentiments les meilleurs. Le Corbusier.'

3. Giampiero Bosoni, 'Lucien Hervé fotografo di Le Corbusier', *Abitare*, vol. 309 (1992), pp. 166–171, 206; p. 206. Hervé continues: 'At first the photos were in black and white, but then I realised that colour was essential to the representation of his work, which came somewhere between painting and architecture. You have to remember that L.C. considered these two different artistic expressions on a par with and very close to one another. In fact, you have to go back to his paintings to understand the sense of colour in his architectural work.' Hervé recalls also Le Corbusier's judgement about the images: 'you have expressed more in your photos than I could ever have wished to express'. The journal published the interview in Italian; a translation in English was provided alongside.

4. Hervé donated the camera to the FLC after the architect's death; Olivier Beer, ed., *Lucien Hervé, L'homme construit* (Paris, Seuil, 2001), p. 22. This catalogue was published to celebrate the acquisition by the Getty Research Institute of the entire collection of negatives produced by Hervé in connection with Le Corbusier. Another important catalogue is, Barry Bergdoll, Véronique Boone, Pierre Puttemans, eds, *Lucien Hervé, L'œil de l'architecte* (Bruxelles, CIVA, 2005).
5. See also a letter from Le Corbusier dated 18th February, 1952, in which he asks Hervé to make contact with the son of Albin Salaün (after the death of the photographer) so as to incorporate in the archive the interesting clichés, following a proper negotiation with the son of the photographer; FLC E(4)247.
6. Wim De Wit, Introduction, in O. Beer, *Lucien Hervé, op. cit.*, p. 7.
7. See Barbara Mazza, 'Le voir en jeu. Les photographes de Le Corbusier, 1920–1940', in, Fondation Le Corbusier, ed., *Le Corbusier. Aventures photographiques*, (Paris, Éditions de La Villette, 2014), pp. 177–193.
8. In November, 1926, in a letter to the Photographie Industrielle du Sud-Ouest (Bordeaux), he sent some instructions for numbering the photographs: 'Il reste entendu que vous mettez le n. sur la photo que vous tirez pour que nous puissions toujours avoir un système de contrôle'; FLC T1(1)21.
9. Evidence of the architect's fanatical post-production control is, for example, in a letter he wrote to the photographer Charles Gérard in 1924: 'I would like you to print three series of each shot for me on a paper allowing retouching. [...] And please note that I would like full-frame images with no cropping'; quoted in *The Constructed Image. Le Corbusier and Photography* (Musée des Beaux-Arts, La Chaux-de-Fonds, 30.9.2012/13.1.2013), Exhibition guide, p. 35.
10. Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* (London, Thames and Hudson, 1980; ed. cons. Bologna, Zanichelli, 2008, p. 406).
11. Beatriz Colomina, *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media* (Cambridge, Mass., The MIT Press, 1994), p. 73.
12. Daniel Naegele, 'Savoye Space', *Harvard Design Magazine*, vol. 15 (2001), pp. 1–10.
13. François Penz, 'Notes and Observations Regarding Pierre Chenal and Le Corbusier's Collaboration on Architectures d'Aujourd'hui (1930–31)', in, Belkis Uluoglu, Ayhan Ensici, Ali Vatansever, eds, *Design and Cinema: Form Follows Film* (Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholar Press, 2006), pp. 149–167: 'these general remarks suggest that the film was much more under the control of Le Corbusier than the credits would indicate. We see here the translation of Le Corbusier's vision and philosophy through the use of the film medium starting to make the new architecture intelligible'; p. 165. *Architectures d'Aujourd'hui* is part of a trilogy with *Bâtir* and *Trois Chantiers*, also in collaboration with Chenal; for a detailed history of the trilogy, see Veronique Boone, 'Un tournage comme tournant', in *Le Corbusier. Aventures photographiques, op. cit.*, pp. 89–101.
14. B. Colomina, 'Vers une architecture médiatique', in, Alexander von Vegesack, et al., eds, *Le Corbusier: The Art of Architecture* (Weil am Rhein, Vitra Design Museum, 2007), pp. 248–273; 'to think about the his 50+ buildings is to miss the real revolution. He was the first architect to fully understand the media.'; p. 248.
15. See Tim Benton, 'Le Corbusier's Secret Photographs', in Nathalie Herschdorfer, Lada Umstätter, eds, *Le Corbusier and the Power of Photography* (London, Thames and Hudson, 2012), pp. 32–51; and also T. Benton's detailed book *LC Foto: Le Corbusier Secret Photographer* (Zurich, Lars Müller, 2013).

16. László Moholy-Nagy, 'Produktion-Reproduktion', *De Stijl*, vol. 5, n. 7 (1922), pp. 97–101. G was published between 1923 and 1926, and also involved Mies van der Rohe at a later stage: see Detlef Mertins, Michael W. Jennings, eds, *G. An Avant-Garde Journal of Art, Architecture, Design and Film* (Los Angeles, Getty Publications, 2010).
17. Sigfried Giedion, *Bauen in Frankreich, Bauen in Eisen, Bauen in Eisenbeton* (Leipzig, Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1928); J. Duncan Berry, trsl., *Building in France, Building in Iron, Building in Ferroconcrete* (Santa Monica, The Getty Centre, 1995), p. 169. See also Werner Oechslin, Gregor Harbusch, eds, *Sigfried Giedion und die Fotografie* (Zurich, gta Verlag, 2010). 1928 is also an important year because Le Corbusier started the collaboration with Charlotte Perriand: besides her crucial contribution towards furniture design in the atelier, her interest in the *objet trouvé*, as well as her talent for photography, cannot be underestimated; see Jacques Barsac, *Charlotte Perriand and Photography. A wide-angle eye* (Paris, 5 Continents, 2011).
18. In a letter from Vichy to Giedion in the Spring of 1941 when he received the proofs of *Space Time and Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1941; first edition), Le Corbusier, in thanking him, wrote that *Building in France* was his favourite book by Giedion and asked for a copy: 'J'ai bien reçu les épreuves de votre livre qui me concerne, mais ce n'était pas du tout ce que je désirais. Il me faudrait votre livre sur l'architecture de fer et de verre du XIX^e siècle pour rappeler à nos gens ce que fut cette grande période. Or c'est là un travail que vous seul avez fait et voilà pourquoi il nous serait si précieux de l'avoir'; FLC E2(3)203.
19. L. Moholy-Nagy, 'How Photography Revolutionises Vision', *The Listener* (8th November, 1933), pp. 688–690; p. 690. See also L. Moholy-Nagy, *Malerei Photographie Film* (Munich, Albert Langen Verlag, 1925; first edition, Bauhausbücher 8), p. 29: 'we have been —through a hundred years of photography and two decades of film—enormously enriched in this respect. We may say that we see the world with entirely different eyes. Nevertheless, the total result to date amounts to little more than a visual encyclopaedic achievement. This is not enough. We wish to produce systematically, since it is important for life that we create new relationships.'
20. T. Benton, 'Le Corbusier's Secret Photographs', *op. cit.*, p. 32.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
22. Michel Richard, 'Herveyde', in Jacques Sbriglio, ed., *Le Corbusier/Lucien Hervé: Contacts* (Paris, L'Atelier d'édition, 2011), p. 7; English edition, *Le Corbusier & Lucien Hervé. The Architect & the Photographer: a Dialogue* (London, Thames and Hudson, 2011). Other interesting letters where Le Corbusier is particularly bitter towards Hervé are FLC E2(4)251 and E2(4)415.
23. Rémi Baudouï, Arnaud Dercelles, eds, *Le Corbusier. Correspondance. Lettres à la famille. Tome I: 1900–1925* (Gollion, Infolio éditions, 2011); R. Baudouï, A. Dercelles, eds, *Le Corbusier. Correspondance. Lettres à la famille. Tome II: 1926–1946* (Gollion, Infolio éditions, 2013); R. Baudouï, A. Dercelles, eds, *Le Corbusier. Correspondance. Lettres à la famille. Tome III: 1947–1965* (Gollion, Infolio éditions, 2016); Marie-Jeanne Dumont, ed., *Le Corbusier. Lettres à Charles L'Eplattenier* (Paris, Éditions du Linteau, 2006).
24. Marco Iuliano, 'A Review of Le Corbusier & Lucien Hervé. The Architect & the Photographer: a Dialogue', *Architectural Histories*, no. 1 (2013), np. On its website, the Getty Research Institute grants public online access to 1050 digital reproductions of the contact sheets held at the Fondation Le Corbusier in Paris (<http://hdl.handle.net/10020/2010r14>).

25. 'Quand un jour Le Corbusier me reçut dans son bureau, nos discutâmes un long moment; je me souviens qu'il me posa de nombreuses questions [...]. Nous étions encore en train de parler quand nous sommes rendu compte que le temps avait passé, et il m'invita à déjeuner. Au cours de ce déjeuner, il me demanda: "Mais comment êtes-vous devenue photographe?" Il pensait que j'étais peintre. "Avec un pair de ciseaux!" me sembla alors être la réponse la plus pertinente.'; H.U. Obrist, *Lucien Hervé*, op. cit., pp. 10–11.
26. O. Beer, ed., *Lucien Hervé*, op. cit., pp. 219–221.
27. H.U. Obrist, *Lucien Hervé*, op. cit., pp. 15–16: 'Non, je ne pensais pas au collage, une pratique que j'aime, mais qui n'avait rien à voir dans ce cas; je pensais plutôt à une liberté et à une rigueur scrupuleuse dans la construction qui devaient être présentes dans chacune de mes images. Voyez-vous, c'est qu'à la différence des nombreux photographes d'alors, je n'avais aucun respect pour la pellicule en soi. Pour la plupart, la pellicule est quasiment sacrée, le cliché qui reste imprimé est définitif. Je pensais au contraire, et pas seulement parce que j'étais un jeune photographe, qu'il fallait être libre en chaque chose, qu'il s'agisse d'un tableau, d'un dessin, d'un collage ou d'une photographie. [...] Dans une image, les rapports des formes et des tons constituent une composition. Chaque image doit parvenir, par l'intervention sur les tirages avec ou sans les ciseaux, à quelque chose de construit, et j'ajouterais aussi à une certaine pureté. Je me sers des ciseaux simplement parce qu'ils aident à atteindre ce résultat.'
- Also, Le Corbusier used to crop printed photographs, before his first met Hervé, particularly for his book *Vers une Architecture* (1923). Indeed, the images of the Parthenon and of the Acropolis taken by the Swiss photographer Frédéric Boissonas are cut and re-framed for his 'best seller'. Le Corbusier's layout composition is a design practice in its own right, explored in detail by Catherine De Smet, *Vers une architecture du livre. Le Corbusier, édition et mise en pages 1912–1965* (Baden, Lars Müller Publisher, 2007). Stanislaus von Moos, in *Le Corbusier: Elements of a Synthesis* (Rotterdam, 010 Publishers, 2009) thinks that 'compared to the straightforward functionalist typography of the Bauhausbücher published in Dessau and designed by László Moholy-Nagy, Le Corbusier's books look fancy with their inclusion of grotesque imagery and visual jokes' (p. 308).
28. Some cartons are also in the Museum of Modern Art in New York: cf. Barry Bergdoll, 'Lucien Hervé et Le Corbusier à travers l'objectif des archives photographiques du MoMA', in *Le Corbusier. Aventures photographiques*, op. cit., pp. 257–271; pp. 260–261.
29. Conversation with Judith Elkan Hervé (Paris, Winter, 2013).
30. J. Sbriglio, ed., *Le Corbusier/Lucien Hervé: Contacts*, op. cit., pp. 46–70.
31. H.U. Obrist, *Lucien Hervé*, op. cit., p. 15: 'J'ai en effet toujours utilisé l'ombre pour construire l'image non pour chercher un effet esthétique, et même quasiment jamais pour cela, mais pour donner de la force à l'image.'
32. 'La pratique artistique de Le Corbusier au cours des années 1940 s'engage de plus en plus dans un rapport avec la matière. Les développements le conduisent à reconsidérer l'aspect brut et tactile de ses bâtiments, notamment l'Unité d'Habitation à Marseille': Caroline Maniaque, *Le Corbusier et les Maisons Jaoul: Projects et fabrique* (Paris, Picard, 2005), pp. 32–33; see also Roberto Gargiani, Anna Rosellini, 'La découverte du béton brut avec malfaçons: chronique du chantier de l'Unité d'Habitation à Marseille', in J. Sbriglio, ed., *Le Corbusier et la question du brutalisme* (Marseille, Parenthèses, 2013), pp. 152–179.
33. Rémi Rouyer, 'Lucien Hervé. Architecture Photographique', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 61, no. 4 (2002), p. 561.

34. S. Giedion, *Bauen in Frankreich*, *op. cit.*, p. 169.
35. L. Moholy-Nagy, 'How Photography Revolutionises Vision', *op. cit.*, p. 690.
36. V. Boone, 'The Epic of the Marseilles Block through the Eyes of the Camera', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 68, no. 1 (2009), pp. 125–128; p. 127.
37. H.U. Obrist, *Lucien Hervé*, *op. cit.*, pp. 15–16.
38. Of course we must recall also Hervé's interest in the Russian photographer Alexandr Rodchenko. On a different note, it is known that Le Corbusier was fascinated by Paul Valéry's work, as described at some length by Niklas Maak, in Chapter 5 of his *Le Corbusier. The Architect on the Beach* (Munich, Hirmer, 2011); in *Az Építészet Nyelve* [*The Language of Architecture*] (Budapest, Corvina Kiadó, 1983), Hervé reproduces 101 photographs using quotations from Paul Valéry to accompany each image.
39. Lucien Hervé, 'A propos de la photographie d'architecture', *Aujourd'hui*, no. 9 (1956), pp. 28–31: 'L'image peinte ou photographie tirera sa valeur de l'harmonie des contrastes en exprimant sa part de sentiments humains. Il importe peu de savoir si une image est due à un appareil photographique ou s'il agit d'un dessin de Seurat ou d'une peinture de Mondrian. La photo, comme la peinture, cesse de tirer son intérêt du sujet seul. La photo, comme la peinture, pénètre le sujet pour souvent ne plus voir sa surface visible. Ce qui complice la comparaison, c'est que le photographe n'est pas seulement artiste, dans le sens de la liberté du sujet, mais souvent interprète. Au même titre qu'un chef d'orchestre ou pianiste, il sélectionne la sonorité des instruments et des tons pour refaire à son goût des harmonies plus pleines, mais respectant scrupuleusement l'intention du compositeur, en l'occurrence l'architecte. D'une œuvre en trois dimensions, il transcrit une image en deux dimensions. Il pénètre dans l'œuvre bâtie. Il s'efforce de comprendre les intentions du créateur.'
40. FLC E2(4)361T: 3rd August, 1956, Le Corbusier to Hervé from Cap Martin. Another letter that is very telling for the intellectual relationship between the two is a short earlier one, dated 3rd June, 1952. Here Le Corbusier encourages Hervé to photograph trunks of different trees in the Bois de Boulogne, sometimes with leaves and flowers, to accompany a description of the *béton brut*: 'La meilleure leçon de choses est fournie par l'écorce de tronc d'arbre avec, à l'occasion, des feuilles ou des fleurs', concludes the architect; FLC E2 (4)258.
41. FLC E2(4)361T: 3rd August, 1956: 'Vous avez fait là une véritable œuvre créatrice. C'est très beau. Très beau, d'avoir vu, puis choisi le lieu et l'heure, puis d'avoir réalisé d'un déclic. Ce n'est pas de la photogénie, c'est de la photo au degré le plus haut.'
42. One of the first images in the book is the reproduction of the painting *La Cheminée* ['The Fireplace']. Hervé wrote: 'I still remember the first time I met him in his painter's studio that at one point he showed me his first painting *La Cheminée* from 1918. "There are few details", he said, "but it's monumental." Then he explained how he had painted that picture about seven years after his first visit to the Parthenon and how that place of purity and light had stayed with him and still haunted him': G. Bosoni, 'Lucien Hervé fotografo di Le Corbusier', *op. cit.*, p. 206. For an analysis of the painting and the relationship with the mental images generated by the written description of the *Voyage d'Orient* that Le Corbusier made in 1911, see, M. Iuliano, 'Montage d'Orient', in, Roberta Amirante, Burcu Kütükoğlu, Panayotis Tournikiotis, Yannis Tsiomis, eds, *L'invention d'un architecte. Le voyage en Orient de Le Corbusier* (Paris, Éditions de La Villette, 2013), pp. 414–423.
43. Lucien Hervé, *The Artist and the writer. Le Corbusier* (Neuchâtel, Editions du Griffon, 1970), pp. 129–131.
44. Daniel Naegele, 'An Interview with Lucien Hervé', *Parametro*, vol. 206 (1995), pp. 70–83; p. 77.

45. Le Corbusier, *Mise au Point* (Paris, Éditions Forces Vives, 1966); Ivan Žaknić, ed., *The final testament of Père Corbu: a translation and interpretation of Mise au Point* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1997).
46. Daniel Hervé: How would describe your work, particularly as a photographer, in a couple of words?

Lucien Hervé: I would answer with just one word: rigour.

Daniel Hervé: Would you say your work has always been as coherent as your rigorous approach requires?

Lucien Hervé: Not at all. Rigour is an outcome.

Gerrit Messiaen, *Lucien Hervé Photographe malgré lui* (Belgium, Atom Films, 2013).